

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration giving the present application. Claims 1 and 2 are currently being prosecuted. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider her rejections in view of the amendments and remarks as set forth below.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

It is gratefully acknowledged that the Examiner considers the subject matter of claim 2 as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. Since Applicants believe that claim 1 from which claim 2 depends is also allowable, the claim has not yet been rewritten in independent form.

CLAIM FOR PRIORITY

The Examiner points out that a reference to the prior application should be inserted at the beginning of the specification. By way of the present amendment, Applicants have inserted such a paragraph referring to both the International PCT application and the French application from which priority is claimed. It is noted that both of these applications were mentioned in the original Declaration.

Furthermore, Applicants note in the Office Action summary section 12 that the Examiner has acknowledged the claim for foreign priority and checked Box 2 which states "Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. PCT/FR03/02990". However, the Examiner has not indicated Box A, B, or C indicating whether all of the copies, some of the copies or none of the copies have been received. Applicants submit that box A

should have been checked indicating that all the copies have been received. Examiner is requested to confirm this understanding.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. 102

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 as being obvious over Schlaepfer (US4415623). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner states that Schlaepfer teaches a method of decorating fabric through transfer printing. The carrier support has glass particles with thermoplastic coating on the top surface, which is placed on top of a fabric material. The laminate is then heated which results in the thermal degradation of the support and fusion of the coating within the fabric.

Applicants submit that claim 1 as presently amended is not anticipated by this reference. First, applicants have modified claim 1 to make it clear that the coating is a powder mineral coating, which is not seen in the reference. Further, the powder mineral coating is carried by a transfer support. This transfer support is pyrolised while the mineral coating's melted, so that the article is coated with a molten mineral coating directly applied on the article.

This differs from Shlaepfer, which shows a decorative article having stones or glass particles carrying a small portion of thermoplastic coating. This coating becomes tacky at 70°C. A carrier sheet 2 is made of cotton backed with a plastic film having a melting point greater than 200°C. This arrangement may be used directly for securing stones or glass particles on the sheet material by positioning the article on the sheet material and heating the carrier sheet until the thermoplastic adhesive is activated and the carrier sheet is removed. However, the stones or glass particles are not melted and the carrier sheet is not pyrolised as is presently claimed.

In the complex process shown in Fig. 4 and 5, the reference applies the decorative article to an embroidery pattern applied to a thermodegradable fabric 7 having a backing of thermoplastic thread 6 so that when the carrier sheet is heated the various thermoplastic materials are activated and the removal of the carrier sheet results in the removal of the degraded fabric 7. However, again, this embodiment does not suggest that the stones or glass particles are melted or that the carrier sheet is pyrolised.

Claim 1 as amended includes a transfer of a powder mineral coating onto articles having skew surfaces. The reference does not discuss the transferring of a powder mineral coating. The first step of the method describes applying the powder mineral coating on the articles which are carried by a transfer support that has a pyrolysis temperature lower than a melting temperature of the coating. The reference does not discuss the pyrolysis temperature of the transfer support. The coating has a sealing temperature lower than the pyrolysis temperature of the transfer support. The reference does not discuss either temperature. The articles are subjected to the melting temperature of the coating. As a result, the coating is melted and the carrier sheet is pyrolised. In view of this, applicant submit that claim 1 is not anticipated by Schlaepfer and that accordingly this rejection is overcome.

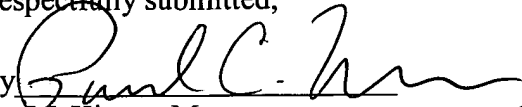
In conclusion, in view of the above remarks, it is believed that the claims clearly distinguish over the patentable item by the Examiner. In view of this, reconsideration of the rejection and allowance of all the claims is respectfully requested.

In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,

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